

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 DEAE-00 IO-13 JUSE-00 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00

SCI-06 OMB-01 AID-20 COME-00 STR-08 CIEP-02 CEA-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7979

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 8442

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR HK

SUBJ: CODEL WOLFF'S VISIT TO HONG KONG

SUMMARY: CODEL WOLFF CONSISTING OF REPRESENTATIVES WOLFF, RANGEL, STARK, ABZUG AND STAFF MEMBER BRADY ARRIVED IN HONG KONG AUG 17 AND JOINED AUG 19 BY CONGRESSMAN MURPHY. IN AIRPORT ARRIVAL PRESS CONFERENCE, CONGRESSMAN WOLFF, IN REPLY TO SERIES OF HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING HIS "DETERMINATION TO GO ALL OUT" TO STOP FLOW OF DRUGS, SUGGESTED POSSIBILITY OF US TRADE SANCTIONS AGAINST HONG KONG IF HKG NOT FULLY COOPERATIVE WITH US IN ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT. IN SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH HK COMMISSIONER OF NARCOTICS ROLPH AND CONGEN OFFICIALS, WOLFF REITERATED POSSIBILITY OF US TRADE SANCTIONS AGAINST HK AND THREATENED REDUCTION IN NATO FORCES TO CAUSE UK TO FORCE HK TO COOPERATE. RESULTANT UNFAVORABLE NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY, ADVERSE EDITORIALS AND OPPOSITION TO WOLFF'S VIEWS BY FIVE OTHER US CONGRESSMEN PROMPTED WOLFF TO ISSUE DEPARTURE STATEMENT WHICH WAS MORE CONCILIATORY. END SUMMARY.

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QM VISIT OF CODEL WOLFF BEGAN WITH FIREWORKS WHEN CONGRESSMAN

WOLFF AT AIRPORT PRESS INTERVIEW HINTED AT POSSIBLE TRADE SANCTIONS AGAINST HONG KONG IF HKG DID NOT FULLY COOPERATE IN STAMPING OUT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. COMMENT RECEIVED FRONTPAGE COVERAGE AND SPARKED EDITORIAL COMMENT, ALMOST ENTIRELY NEGATIVE. AT AUG 18 MEETING AT CONGEN WITH HK COMMISSIONER FOR NARCOTICS ROLPH, WOLFF STATED HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES CONSIDERED DRUG FLOW TO THE US AS FORM OF AGGRESSION AGAINST US AND WERE PREPARED TO DO ANYTHING TO ELIMINATE IT. HE SPECULATED THAT IF HE BELIEVED HKG WERE NOT FULLY COOPERATIVE, HIS VOTE ON SUCH ISSUES AT CONTINUATION OF NATO TROOPS IN EUROPE, TRADE RESTRICTIONS AGAINST HONG KONG, ETC MIGHT BE INFLUENCED.

2. DURING MEETING, ROLPH AND CONGEN OFFICERS STATED THAT BECAUSE OF GREAT VOLUME OF OCEAN AND AIR FREIGHT THROUGH HK IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE IF NARCOTICS IN ANY LARGE AMOUNTS WERE BEING TRANSSHIPPED THROUGH HONG KONG TO US. ACTING PRINCIPAL OFFICER ALSO EXPLAINED THAT DESPITE INTENSIVE INVESTIGATION BY HK AND US NARCOTICS OFFICIALS WE HAD NO EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT HONG KONG IS A MAJOR CENTER OF DRUG TRAFFICKING TO US. CONGRESSMAN WOLFF AT THIS POINT SUGGESTED MALFEASANCE AND INDIFFERENCE ON PART OF CONGEN FOR FAILURE TO PROVE HIS CONTENTION THAT HK WAS A MAJOR SOURCE AND TRANSHIPMENT POINT FOR HEROIN TRAFFIC TO US. LATER SAME DAY, WOLFF HELD SEPARATE INTERVIEWS WITH SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST, NBC AND ABC, LATTER TWO BOTH DESIGNED FOR AMERICAN TV AUDIENCES. NO CONGEN OFFICIAL PRESENT AT ANY OF THESE INTERVIEWS.

3. AT AUGUST 20 BRIEFING BY CONGEN OFFICERS, CODEL WOLFF MEMBERS WERE PROVIDED MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON NATURE OF PROBLEM IN HONG KONG AND VARIOUS PROGRAMS BY CONGEN TO WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH HKG OFFICIALS IN SUPPRESSING NARCOTICS TRADE. THESE INCLUDED TRILATERAL MEETING IN JUNE, INDICATION OF TYPES OF COOPERATION BETWEEN DEA AND HKG, PROGRAMS TO COMBAT DRUG-RELATED OFFENCES AND DEATHS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL, CURRENT SHORTAGE ANF HIGHER PRICES OF DRUGS IN HONG JONG, ETC. AGAIN, MAJOR ISSUE AT DEBATE WAS ROLE OF HK IN DRUG TRAFFIC TO US. WOLFF STATED THAT IT WAS EVASION OF RESPONSIBILITY NOT TO POINT FINGER AT HK AUTHORITIES FOR THEIR FAILURE TO QUANTIFY AND STOP DRUG SHIPMENTS TO US.

4. AS A RESULT OF NEWSPAPER STORIES AND EDITORIALS (HK 8309 AND CONFIDENTIAL

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8310), FIVE CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS OF CODEL EILBERG SENT LETTER TO HONG KONG NEWSPAPERS (HK 8338). LETTER WHICH DISAGREED STRONGLY WITH WOLFF'S STATEMENT WAS SENT TO NEWSPAPERS AUG 20 AFTER CONGRESSMAN WOLFF HAD BEEN INFORMED OF ITS CONTENTS. WOLFF THEN ISSUED MORE TEMPERATE DEPARTURE STATEMENT WHICH WAS RELEASED BY CONGEN. (HK 8338).

5. AFTER DEPARTURE OF WOLFF AND OTHER MEMBERS OF CODEL, CONGRESS-

MAN MORGAN MURPHY REMAINED IN HK UNTIL AUG 22. IN SEPARATE MEETING WITH COMMISSIONER ROLPH, CONGRESSMAN MURPHY REFERRED TO WOLFF STATEMENTS AND INDICATED THAT HE WAS NOT IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH WOLFF. HE COMPLIMENTED ROLPH ON WHAT HE UNDERSTOOD TO BE A DIFFICULT TASK WHICH HE WAS UNDERTAKING WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS AND EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT HKG-USG COOPERATION IN NARCOTICS EFFORT WAS CLOSE AND SATISFACTORY.

6. COMMENTS: HK NEWSPAPERS HAVE IN PAST BEEN ALL TOO EAGER TO EXAGGERATE VARIOUS STATEMENTS BY AMERICAN OFFICIALS CRITICIZING HKG AUTHORITIES FOR LACK OF COOPERATION IN ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT AND CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S STATEMENT WAS ESPECIALLY SEIZED UPON SINCE IT HIT DIRECTLY AT THE MAINSTAY OF HONG KONG'S EXISTANCE, IE TRADE. WOLFF'S COMMENTS DURING MEETING WITH HKG OFFICIAL ALSO DID LITTLE TO ASSIST IN TASK OF COOPERATIVELY WORKING WITH HKG AUTHORITIES TO SUPPRESS INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING. AS INDICATED IN STATE 157570, CODEL HAD NOT BEEN BRIEFED PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FROM US AND IT WAS READILY APPARENT THAT REP ABZUG, STARK AND RANGEL HAD LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OR BACKGROUND ON INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFIC AND SITUATION.
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